

**DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
CERTIFICATION PROGRAM ADVISORY COMMITTEE
FOR WATER AND WASTEWATER SYSTEMS OPERATORS**

**May 28, 2015, Meeting Minutes
Room 105, RCSOB**

Advisory Committee Members Present

Paul Zielinski, Chairman
John Ackerman
Sophie Simon
Douglas Pike
Jerry Brown
Steve Martinez
Jeffrey Staul
Jon Prawdzik
Darrel Hutchinson
Jestine Reider
Jeffrey Culton

Advisory Committee Members Absent

David Eisenberger
Michael Henry
Edward Gulick
Brenda Firestone
Jesse Weiss
David Smith

DEP Employees Present

Phil Consonery, Bureau of Safe Drinking Water (BSDW)
Cheri Sansoni, BSDW
Bill McNamara, BSDW
Gary Moyer, BSDW
Scott Sykes, BSDW
Leslie Ferguson, BSDW
Dorena Tenaglia, BSDW
Roland Gensel, BSDW
Dawn Hissner, BSDW
Robert Digilarmo, Bureau of Point and Non-Point Source Management

Others Present

Ghassan Khaled, Environmental Protection Agency

Chairman Paul Zielinski called the Certification Program Advisory Committee (CPAC) meeting to order at 9:01 A.M. in Room 105 of the Rachel Carson State Office Building. There was a quorum.

Approval of March 11, 2015 Minutes

Doug Pike moved to approve the March 11, 2015 meeting minutes. Jerry Brown seconded. The vote was unanimous.

Status of Certified Operators and Trends

Phil Consonery presented a report on Pennsylvania's Operator Certification Program. The presentation contained statistics, charts and trend graphs covering certified operators and certificates in Pennsylvania, facility class types, operator demographics and certification exams. The presentation is posted in the Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) public participation center in the CPAC area.

Compliance Rate Determination/Enforcement

Dawn Hissner presented information from Chapter 302 regulations regarding the Available Operator Report (AOR), owner's responsibilities, operator standard operating procedures and reporting violations. eFACTS is DEP's main database for the Operator Certification Program that provides operator information and links the operators to facilities. The AORs have been mailed out annually since 2011. For drinking water facilities, the compliance trend is improving:

- 14% of systems did not have an available operator in 2011.
- 13% did not have an available operator in 2012.
- 10% did not have an available operator in 2013.
- 5% did not have an available operator in 2014.

For wastewater facilities, the trends are similar:

- 11% of systems did not have an available operator in 2011.
- 7% did not have an available operator in 2012 and 2013.
- Only 53 out of 2,400 facilities (2%) did not have an available operator in 2014.

Field inspectors conduct compliance and enforcement activities. Gary Moyer and Scott Sykes track system fees and AORs. Types of enforcement actions include notice of violations (NOV), summary citation, field order, and Consent Order and Agreement (CO&A). Penalties come into play when an operator is in violation of an order and could result in an operator's certificate being revoked or suspended. DEP's drinking water staff will be working with the wastewater staff to determine when a NOV is appropriate versus a CO&A or a petition to revoke/suspend an operator's certificate.

Strategic Planning

At the March meeting, CPAC members were asked to rank the top three elements out of 15 used during an external program review. They selected the following elements (in priority order) and discussed areas of strength and weakness in regards to the priority elements.

Status of Certified Operators and Trends

- Tracking of operator certification and continuing education, statistics on examinees, distribution of operators across the state, etc.

Compliance Rate Determination/Enforcement

- Number and types of systems with uncertified operators and inappropriately certified operators.
- DEP's enforcement strategy, which was identified as a weakness in the internal program review.

Strategic Planning

- This involves DEP's and the Certification Board's vision of where the program needs to go within the next 5 years. At their April 15, 2015 meeting, the Board identified workforce development as a top priority.

DEP made a commitment to capture the members' discussion on priorities, areas of strengths and weaknesses of the certification program, and recommendations. DEP will then incorporate this information into a draft report titled *Five-Year External Review Report on the Water and Wastewater Systems Operator Certification Program*. DEP committed to distributing the draft to all members in July for review and comment. Additionally, DEP will include the results of the statewide program survey in the final report. The survey results will be presented to the CPAC members at their next meeting.

2015 Survey Questions

Bill McNamara reported on distributing electronic surveys to drinking water and wastewater certified operators, system owners, training and exam providers, and examinees. He also discussed timeframes and feedback related to the survey.

Comments from the Public

There were no comments from the public.

Paul Zielinski moved to reschedule the July 22, 2015 meeting to later this year due to the certification survey results deadline date of September 30, 2015. Doug Pike seconded. The vote was unanimous, and the motion carried. After touching base with the members, DEP will schedule a meeting in late 2015 and distribute the meeting date to CPAC.

The meeting adjourned at 11:36 A.M.